

Worship Together - 1st November 2020

Welcome to today's worship service!

I hope you are keeping well and are continuing to know God's encouragement and leading during these weeks. Today we will have a message from Lee Johnson, and before that we will worship God together – in the church building or at home.

Notices:

Following the announcements by the Prime Minister yesterday evening the church leaders have taken the decision to close the church again until further notice. Worship will move to online only from 8th November.

Our first song will be familiar as a Christmas song but is also a song of invitation to worship Jesus our Saviour, to focus on him and give him praise and adoration.

Song: O come all ye faithful

Let's pray together

Creator of all,
Sustainer of all,
Saviour of all,
Light of light,
Lord of Lords,
God of this world and the next,
Your glory and majesty are beyond our understanding,
Your power is too awesome to behold.
And yet your love enfolds us as a gentle breeze.
We bless your holy name
and give you our thanks and praise
Amen

Lee is going to be speaking to us from a passage in the book of Ezra which tells of the people praising God and saying, '*He is good, his love endures for ever*'. I was reminded of Psalm 136 which has the phrase 'his love endures forever' as a response to statements about God.

I want to borrow some of that Psalm this morning and add a couple of ideas. We're going to explore the word 'endures' by substituting some similar words, and we're going to add some of our own statements of praise.

So, if you'd like to, reflect on this last week for a minute and pick a couple of things you want to praise God for. You may want to share them on the CareNshare whatsapp group as a testimony to encourage the rest of us but also have them ready to add into our Psalm.

Let's say together:

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.

His love endures for ever.

Give thanks to the God of gods.

His love is long lasting.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

His love persists.

to him who alone does great wonders,
who by his understanding made the heavens,
who spread out the earth upon the waters,
who made the great lights –
the sun to govern the day,
the moon and stars to govern the night;

His love is unwavering.

His love endures for ever.

His love remains.

His love is constant.

His love is unending.

His love endures for ever.

to him who divided the Red Sea asunder
and brought Israel through the midst of it,
to him who led his people through the wilderness;
He remembered us in our low estate
and freed us from our enemies.

His love is stable.

His love continues.

His love is firm.

His love is unchanging.

His love endures for ever.

Your statements here

His love is permanent.

His love is eternal.

His love is steady.

Give thanks to the God of heaven.

His love endures for ever.

As we are thinking about God's love let's read this poem by David Hopwood, which is based on 1 Corinthians 13.

Love is patient and kind.
It is not jealous or conceited or proud.
Love is difficult,
Often calling us when we are busy.

Love is in the small things.

It can feel insignificant, too small to count.
Love rarely makes the headlines
Yet it can change someone's world.

Love goes against the flow,
Cuts against the grain, points to the narrow road.
Love can feel like trudging up hill,
Battling against a wind, walking a lonely path.

But God is love.
And God has walked these ways before us.
Love is pinned to the skyline,
Nailed to a darkened, belittled cross

Love changes the world,
One heartbeat, one sacrifice at a time.

Let's continue to consider God's love for us in this next song:

Song: How deep the fathers love for us

And let's pray together:

Father God, we thank you for your deep, permanent and immeasurable love for us.
Thank you for continuing to love us even though we have failed you and are prone to keep on failing you in our thoughts, words, and deeds.
Lord we ask for your forgiveness and for your help to live more as you would have us live, following your word and example.
Thank you for your grace and mercy.
Amen

Let's sing again, remembering that we are loved and forgiven:

Song: Find rest o my soul

Liz is leading us in our prayers for the world:

I would like to focus our prayers today on the country of Chad.
First, we're going to watch a BMS World Mission video showing the work of Guinebor II Hospital

<https://vimeo.com/447187223>

Chad is in central Africa and was part of France's African holdings until 1960. The country then endured three decades of civil war, as well as invasions by Libya, before peace was finally restored in 1990. The government eventually drafted a democratic constitution and held presidential elections in 1996 and 2001.

In 1998, a rebellion broke out in northern Chad, which has sporadically flared up despite several peace agreements between the government and the insurgents. There was a significant insurrection in early 2008 but there have been no threats from rebel groups since then.

More than half of the population is Muslim and one third is Christian. The remainder follow indigenous religious beliefs or are of no faith. Most people living in the north of the country practice Islam, and most of those in the south practice Christianity or indigenous religions. The majority of Muslims adhere to the Sufi tradition, and a minority of Muslims (5 to 10 percent) hold more fundamentalist beliefs. Roman Catholics represent the largest Christian group and most Protestants affiliate with different evangelical Christian groups. There are also small Bahai and Jehovah's Witnesses communities.

The constitution provides that the country shall be a secular state; however, in practice some policies favour Islam. Religious leaders are involved in managing the country's wealth. A representative of the religious community sits on the Revenue Management College, the body that oversees use of oil revenues. The seat rotates between Muslim and Christian leaders every four years.

There are more people in Chad who have never been reached with the Gospel than in any other African country.

Chad has been rated the seventh poorest country in the world by the United Nations' Human Development Index.

The Republic of Chad has the fifth highest death rate in the world.

Let's pray

LORD we pray together for the people of Chad.

We pray for those who struggle in poverty, for those who are malnourished and those who cannot afford medical care.

We pray for the nation's leaders that they would govern with integrity and honesty and pray against government corruption.

Lord God, please provide medical care and services to the people of Chad. We pray that you would bless the work of the whole team at Guinebor II Mission Hospital. Thank You for their compassion, dedication and hard work.

Please give them the strength and energy they need to continue to provide excellent care to the communities they serve.

We pray for those who have never heard the good news about Jesus. We ask that You would reveal Yourself to them through Your Holy Spirit and Your Word so that they may come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Please encourage and empower Your Church in Chad. Give them Your joy and peace as they seek to follow Jesus every day. Protect them and inspire them through Your Spirit.

We pray in Jesus powerful Name

Amen.

Bernie and Rosemary have put together a video of the reading from Ezra chapter 3 for us:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZM19H6DXps&feature=youtu.be>

Lee Johnson brings us [today's message](#)

Take a few moments to reflect on what has been said today. Is there something that you need to consider or do? Please talk with a friend or get in touch with the leaders if you want to discuss or pray about something with them.

As we finish let's praise God again and proclaim his enduring love again.

Song: [Lord let your glory fall](#)

And let's say these words together, for ourselves and for each other until we meet again.

May the Grace of God uphold you,
the Peace of God surround you,
the Love of God flow from you
and the Strength of God protect you.

May God's Word be in your heart.
May God's Word be on your lips.
May God's Word be in your touch.
May God's Word direct your feet.

On this day and all your days to come
May God's Word be the life you live.